

I. Update Item: 2016 Elk Season Update

The Wildlife Division will provide an update on the bull elk archery and firearms seasons and cow elk archery/crossbow seasons.

II. Discussion Items: Modification of 301 KAR 2:132, Elk quota hunts.

The Wildlife Division recommends the following changes:

1. Create a mechanism to award an elk tag to landowners for the allowance of elk trapping for restoration purposes.

Justification: It has become increasingly challenging for the Department to secure locations to trap elk on private property. Limited capture locations have made it problematic to catch elk for translocation. The biggest hurdle for gaining access has been lack of incentive for landowners to provide elk trapping access. We propose the creation of a mechanism to award elk hunting permits to landowners in exchange for allowing KDFWR to remove elk from their property as part of a restoration project. KDFWR would use a point system to track progress toward the award of a permit. The landowner would receive 1 point for each elk that KDFWR removed from their property. Upon accruing 10 points the landowner would be issued an either-sex elk permit that will be good for the following elk season. In the event that KDFWR staff did not capture enough animals to warrant the issuance of a permit, the points would roll over to the following year. There would be no limit as to how many permits could be issued annually to a given landowner. The permit could only be used on the landowner's property or property they lease, and it would be fully transferable. Quantitative ranking criteria will be developed for potential trapping sites to ensure KDFWR trapping efforts are focused on the best available properties and elk will only be trapped during winter months.

2. Reduce the number of applicants for the group area applications from 5 to 2

Justification: The group application option was put into place when all drawn hunters had to apply for a secondary drawing to be awarded a place to hunt. Now drawn hunters are initially given the "at-large" designation and only apply to hunt in an LEA. The group application was put into place to allow hunters that might know each other to ensure they hunted the same area regardless of weapon type.

3. Allow any legal weapon for elk hunting during the 7 day firearms hunts.

Justification: Currently, a drawn hunter must use firearms. We receive many requests from hunters wanting to use a bow or crossbow, but they are not legally allowed. Hunters would still be required to meet the minimum standards for archery/crossbow requirements for elk hunting, but would now be allowed to carry a firearm or archery equipment during their 7 day hunt.

4. Create 2 new Elk Management Units (EMUs)

- **Knott-Floyd EMU**
- **Mayking EMU**

Justification: These areas have been traditional areas for elk vehicles collision incidences and nuisance issues. The Knott-Floyd EMU boundaries will be ¼ mile on either side of the road measured from the centerline of HWY 550 from the intersection of 550 and 1697 to the intersection of 550 and Rt. 7; next, HWY 899 from the intersection of 899 and 1697 to the intersection of 899 and Rt. 7; next, HWY 582 from the intersection of 582 and 1393 to the intersection of 582 and Rt. 7, and lastly, Rt. 7 from the intersection of Rt. 7 and 550 to the intersection of 1498 and Rt. 7. The Mayking EMU boundaries will be ½ mile on either side of the road, measured from the center line, from HWY 119 from the intersection of HWY 119 and 2034 (Ermine) to the intersection of HWY 119 and Hwy 805.

5. Remove the Knott County and Stoney Fork Elk Management Units

Justification: Additional harvest is no longer needed in these units.

6. Remove the barbed restriction for broadheads

Justification: Many modern broadheads have barbs on the back of the cutting head. The restriction of not allowing them is a relic of the past to where older style broadheads had barbs on them and were not a humane type of broadhead.

7. 2017-18 Elk Permit Recommendations

- The Wildlife Division will recommend the number of permits to be issued at the December Commission meeting.

Justification: The 2016 season is currently ongoing and results from this year's hunt are vital in making recommendations for the 2017-18 hunting season.

III. Discussion Items: 301 KAR 2:172 Deer Hunting Seasons, Zones and Requirements

The Wildlife Division recommends the following changes:

1. Modification of the Weapon Requirements

- The Wildlife Division recommends the update of our regulations to list weapons a hunter shall use instead of listing weapons not allowed.
- The Wildlife Division recommends that center fire firearms be used for deer hunting.
- The Wildlife Division has received a request to also make modern air rifles legal.

Justification: Currently our regulations read what a hunter shall not use, but as new hunting equipment becomes available we have to update our regulations to prohibit their uses. By changing the regulations to read what they shall use it clears up the legal weapons for deer hunting. This type of regulation cleanup has already been completed for the elk and bear regulations. In doing so, the department recommends we allow centerfire modern firearms during the modern firearms season. The recent deer hunter survey indicated that a majority of our respondents felt non-traditional firearms (airbows, air rifles, etc) should not be allowed for deer hunting and air rifles are not eligible for PR funding. However, large caliber air rifles have been requested by some hunters. If the Commission chooses to permit modern air rifles, the Division recommends minimum standards.

2. Modification of the Tagging Requirement

- The Wildlife Division recommends the modification of the tagging requirement to allow hunters to remove the hide or head from the carcass before checking.
- The Wildlife Division recommends the creation of a proof of sex requirement on a carcass if the carcass has been cut into pieces, deboned, and/or the hide or head has been removed.

Justification: Many deer hunters harvest a deer in a place where there is no cell phone service to telecheck a deer. Requiring hunters to telecheck before this can be accomplished puts an undue burden on some deer hunters. Hunters would still be required to telecheck the animal before midnight of the day the animal is recovered.

The proof of sex requirement insures that if an animal is taken, law enforcement can correctly identify the sex of the animal. The requirement for proof of sex would be: Antlered animal: head with antlers attached to carcass; or testicle, scrotum, or penis attached to the carcass. Antlerless animal: Head, udder, or vulva attached to carcass. If the carcass is cut into pieces or deboned, evidence of sex needs to be attached to a quarter or another major part of the carcass. All portions must be transported together.

3. Remove the barbed restriction for broadheads

Justification: Many modern broadheads have barbs on the back of the cutting head. The restriction of not allowing them is a relic of the past to where older style broadheads had barbs on them and were not a humane type of broadhead.

4. Require 144in² of unbroken hunter orange, visible from 360°, on all manufactured ground blinds during deer modern firearm season, KDFWR quota hunts and both muzzleloader seasons.

Justification: As manufactured ground blinds have become more popular we have seen an increased use of them. During firearms seasons hunters are able

to completely hide and their hunter orange is not visible to other hunters. This requirement would allow for an occupied ground blind to be seen by other hunters on the areas to ensure a safer hunt. 144in² is the dimensions of an adult hat.

IV. Discussion Items: 301 KAR 2:178 Deer Hunting on WMA's, State Parks, other Public Lands and Federally Controlled Areas

The Wildlife Division recommends the following changes:

- 1. Remove the 1 deer per day on all quota hunts and open WMA's in zone 2, 3 and 4.**

Justification: This regulation was put into place when most of our WMA's gave bonus permits for deer. Now all deer harvested on KDFWR quota hunts count towards a hunter's statewide bag limit. Bag limits will now default to the county bag limit.

- 2. Remove the 15 in spread restriction on all WMA's.**

Justification: Currently, Paintsville Lake, Dewey Lake, Dennis-Gray, Green River Lake, Ballard, West Kentucky and Pennyryle State Forest-Trade Water WMAs all have 15in spread restrictions. These restrictions have been in place since the early 2000's and harvest data suggest that protecting bucks with less than 15in spreads does not allow for older age class bucks in the harvest. Furthermore, these restrictions were put into place when bonus permits were issued and hunters were then more apt to shoot a younger, smaller-antlered deer.

- 3. Open the following WMA's to the early youth season and the free youth weekend:**

- Red Bird WMA, Beaver Creek WMA, Mill Creek WMA, T.N. Sullivan, Mullins, Twin Eagle, Dennis-Gray, Green River and Rockcastle River WMAs.

Justification: In an effort to provide more opportunity for youth to hunt, the Wildlife Division feels these areas can handle the additional pressure and should be open to all youth hunting.

- 4. Open the following WMAs to late muzzleloader season:**

- Dewey Lake, Fishtrap Lake, Paintsville Lake, Ping-Sinking Valley, Knobs State Forest, Mullins, Twin Eagle, Veterans Memorial, Dr. James R. Rich, Griffith Woods, John A. Kleber, John C. Williams, Kentucky River, T.N. Sullivan, Curtis Gate Lloyd, Taylorsville Lake and Yellowbank WMAs.

Justification: The deer herds on many of our WMAs have increased to where additional hunting pressure needs to be allowed.

5. Remove the quota hunt on the following WMAs:

- Mill Creek, Beaver Creek, and the 3rd Taylorsville Lake quota hunts

Justification: Participation on Mill Creek and Beaver Creek is extremely limited and quota hunts are not filling up the spots available. The Taylorsville hunts will no longer be needed as these areas will now be open to muzzleloader hunting seasons in December.

6. Remove the preference points for harvested female deer and remove the antlerless deer only requirement on quota hunt on Taylorsville WMA:

- Taylorsville Lake WMA

Justification: With opening the area to muzzleloader season and removing some of the quota hunts the need to harvest additional antlerless deer is minimized. The remaining quota hunts will be open for either sex deer to be harvested.

7. Open the following WMAs for the first weekend of modern firearms season:

- Mill Creek, Beaver Creek and Rockcastle River WMAs

Justification: With the removal of the quota hunts on Mill Creek and Beaver Creek we need to offer some additional firearms hunting. Including Rockcastle River WMA will make for regulation consistency as Redbird WMA, Mill Creek WMA, Beaver Creek WMA and Rockcastle River WMA will all be the same for deer hunting.

8. Open Rolling Fork River WMA under statewide regulations for deer hunting

Justification: This recently acquired WMA has a healthy population of deer and extremely limited access. Due to the limited access and tough terrain we expect the deer harvest to be limited and not detrimental to the population on the area. Additionally, this would open up an area in the Blue Grass Region that would allow for modern firearms hunting.

9. Open Rockcastle River WMA for archery and crossbow hunting under statewide restrictions for deer hunting

Justification: This is a new property and opening it up under statewide for archery and crossbow deer season will make it consistent with all other WMAs in the state.

10. Allow for small game hunting and the October shotgun season for turkey during the Archery/Crossbow quota hunt on Big Rivers WMA.

Justification: Currently, only drawn hunters for a quota hunt are allowed to be on a WMA during a quota hunt. Due to the length of the archery/crossbow quota hunt, we wish to permit other users of the WMA to be allowed to hunt small game under statewide regulations and turkeys during the October shotgun season.

11. Drop the last day (Wed) of the 5 day quota hunt on West Kentucky WMA.

Justification: Participation is extremely low on the last day of this deer quota hunt. Furthermore, a field trial starts the following day and removing the 5th day of the quota hunt would allow field trial coordinators to release birds the day before the trial.

12. Create a mentor shotgun-only quota hunt on West Kentucky WMA.

Justification: The US Department of Energy has granted permission for shotgun-only firearms hunting on the "A" area of the WMA. Staff believe it can be hunted safely and propose a mentor quota hunt during the same time of the normal Dec quota hunt on the remaining part of the WMA.

13. Open Livingston County WMA to modern firearms hunting.

Justification: This WMA is only open for muzzleloader, archery and crossbow use during the modern firearms season. This restriction was put into place as a safety measure when the area was opened as a WMA. With the area having been open to hunting for some time with no problems, additional restrictions to address safety concerns are no longer warranted.

14. Remove the KDFWR staff check stations at the following state resort parks:

- Lake Barkley State Resort Park and Greenbo Lake State Resort Park

Justification: These state resort parks will still be a KDFWR administered quota hunt, but the check stations will no longer be manned by KDFWR staff. Quota hunt participants will check in and check out at an unmanned check station at the park headquarters.

15. Create unmanned KDFWR administered quota hunts on the following state resort parks:

- Kincaid Lake State Park, Dale Hollow State Resort Park, and Kenlake State Resort Park

Justification: State Parks is currently revising their deer management efforts in an effort to control the population, offer additional hunting opportunity and increase use of the parks. These parks will be open for quota deer hunts. Quota hunt participants will check in and check out at an unmanned check station at the park headquarters.

16. Create the following special hunts on the following state resort parks:

- Taylorsville Lake State Park, John James Audubon State Park, My Old Kentucky Home State Park, Greenbo Lake State Resort Park, Blue Licks Battlefield State Resort Park, and Carter Caves State Resort Park

Justification: State Parks is currently revising their deer management efforts in an effort to control the population, offer additional hunting opportunity and increase use of the parks. These parks will be open for deer hunting and special hunts will be administered by State Park staff.

V. Discussion Items: 301 KAR 2:083 Holding and intrastate transportation of captive cervids

The Wildlife Division recommends the following changes:

1. Require the grandfathered Non-Commercial permit holders to report annually a herd census with the unique animal identification numbers.

Justification: Currently, these permit holders are not required to report on the number of deer and their corresponding ear tags. Having this data will allow better records keeping and tracking of individual animals in these facilities.

2. Require the grandfathered Non-Commercial permit holders to report all deaths and have each animal tested for Chronic Wasting Disease.

Justification: Currently, animals that die in these facilities are not required to be tested for CWD. Requiring the testing of these animals will allow us to have better surveillance of CWD in the state. Cervids that die in the captive cervid permitted facility must be tested and this requires both facility types to have the same testing requirement.

VI. Update Item: Public Lands Reclassification

The Wildlife Division will provide a brief update on the development of a classification system for naming of Wildlife Management Areas.